



January 29, 2006



Sharon, Gary, Marc & Amanda visited with Alexis in her new San Francisco flat.



We visited the old ferry building on the embarcadero for lunch and shopping.



It was a beautiful day in San Francisco



**The day ended with a
stunning sunset
near the Cliff House**



February 26, 2006
Sharon gets her birthday present
from Marc & Amanda





March 11, 2006
“Tea and Talk” with *Home Gardening*
 hosted by Ivy Darden and
 Linda Arredondo



March 13, 2006
Celebrating Amanda's
birthday with dinner
at Sharon & Gary's





**March 22, 2006
Gary at Custom House
Plaza in Monterey**



**March 26, 2006
Visiting the new
De Young Museum
in San Francisco
with Alexis**



**March 26, 2006 - The Japanese Tea Garden
at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco**





Alexis, Scarlet, Grover, Sharon and Gary getting ready for dinner at Aziza Restaurant to celebrate Alexis' birthday



March 27 - Sharon and Gary shopped in Berkeley and lunched at Spenger's



**April 8, 2006
Connie Pitt and Betty Cornelisen
hosted a bridal shower for Amanda**



Food, drink, friends, fun and presents!





Kim was the winner of the toilet paper bride costume game!





Gifts galore for the blushing bride!



**April 10, 2006
Amanda and Marc's civil ceremony
in Fresno**



**We met Jeremy and Kerry
at their house and had
some fun with Atticus
and his friend Sam**



We passed the Divorce Center on the way to the Fresno County Clerk's office



Filling out the forms

Sharon, Marc, Amanda, Kerry and Jeremy





**Lunch at Campagnia
following the
marriage ceremony**



**The newly married
couple at home**

April 22, 2006
Breakfast before the Master Gardener
Tour at Ivy and Linda's house



Everyone loved Ivy's fabulous breakfast and Linda's spring decor





**“Home Gardening”
on the 2006 Master
Gardener Tour**



April 22, 2006
Breakfast before the Master Gardener
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Everyone loved Ivy's fabulous breakfast and Linda's spring decor





**“Home Gardening”
on the 2006 Master
Gardener Tour**



April 23, 2006
The Norelma Walker Youth Library at the
Unitarian Universalist Church of Fresno
presented "The Tale of Peter Rabbit" in
Scottish and English



Denise Sciandra read
the book in English and
Linda Spalding read
the book in Scottish



Sharon Rossi created
the decor for this event



April 23, 2006
Ivy and Linda prepared an
extravagant Italian five course
dinner to celebrate
Marc and Amanda's
upcoming wedding
in Italy



Marc and Amanda
unwrapped their wedding gift - a Kitchen Aid mixer



The grand finale of the dinner was a three tier Meyer lemon wedding cake. Ivy and Linda grew the lemons, squeezed them, and made the delicious cake from scratch!



It was a beautiful evening spent with good friends



May 17, 2006 - After a long day flying from Fresno to Rome, we began our vacation with a visit to the Roman ruins at Ostia Antica, near the sea just outside the city of Rome.



We spent the warm and sunny morning walking through the ruins of the ancient town.





After the ruins, we found a great gelato shop next to the renaissance walled village at the Rocca di Julio II in Ostia.



Amanda & Marc at their cottage

In the afternoon, we drove four hours north to meet up with the family at "Il Sapito", where Amanda & Marc were to celebrate their wedding on May 20.



Amanda's sister Katy and her mother Katherin joined us on the patio of our cottage to enjoy the beautiful sunset.



May 18 - On Thursday morning, we drove 45 minutes into Florence. Our day started at the Accademia, then we visited the Duomo with a short stop in between for a bite to eat.





When visiting Florence, you must stop for the world's best gelato at Vivoli's. It's delicious, but it's even better when you eat it on a stone bench in the sunny Piazza Santa Croce.

We were to meet Alexis at the train station in Florence at 6PM, but she arrived earlier and while walking through town just happened to spot us eating our gelato! What a coincidence ... of course we had to go back to Vivoli's because Alexis hadn't been there yet!



May 19 - On Friday morning, Sharon, Gary and Katherin took a drive to Volterra, a Tuscan hill town famous for its alabaster. We enjoyed another warm, sunny day in this beautiful town. After visiting a workshop to watch a master carver working with the alabaster, we had a delicious lunch at an outdoor cafe before heading back to Il Sapito.





By Friday afternoon, Matt & Suzanne, and Bill & Mariana with their children Peter & Fritz had arrived. We all went to dinner at Le Vecchie Mura in San Gimignano on Friday night.



May 20
Saturday was the big day! Jo Bertolino, the wedding celebrant, helped with the flowers in preparation for the ceremony.



May 21 - Sharon & Gary left Tuscany in the morning and made a late morning visit to the walled town of Lucca. After walking on the wall and enjoying the antiques street market, we drove on to Vernazza.



After a hair-raising drive on the cliffs of the Cinqueterre, we arrived in Vernazza.



A cocoa-striped ravioli with pesto was the highlight of Gary's dinner!



May 22 - Another warm, sunny day started with a spectacular hike along the coast from the Cinqueterre town of Corniglia to Manarola where we stopped for lunch.



After lunch, we continued our hike along the Via Dell' Amore toward the town of Riomaggiore.



The tunnel galleries (the train runs below) were filled with colorful and interesting graffiti - and gorgeous views!

We strolled through Riomaggiore with a pause for Gary's daily gelato break, then rode the train back to Vernazza late in the afternoon.



Our final evening in Vernazza was spent watching the sunset from a harborside dinner table on the main piazza.





May 23 - A three hour drive took us from the Italian Riviera to the French Riviera. Our first stop was the town of Turbie to see the Caesar Augustus monument to the pacification of Gaul. From there we had a bird's eye view of Monaco, which was a good way of seeing it because the the principality was packed for the Gran Prix.



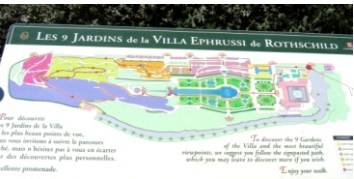
We made a short stop at the hilltop village of Eze (in Gaul) before heading for Antibes. The peninsula in the distance is Cap-Ferrat.



Although it was difficult to find, we were glad to arrive at Le Bastide du Bosquet, our B&B in Antibes where we spent the next three nights.



May 24 - Following a sunny breakfast in the garden of La Bastide, we visited the Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild gardens in St. Jean-Cap-Ferrat.





After the gardens, we strolled around Villefranche-sur-Mer until we found the perfect place for an ice cream!

That evening, we walked from La Bastide to Juan-les-Pins for a fun dinner at Le Creperie Bretonne.



May 25 - On Thursday, we spent the whole day exploring the historic center of Antibes. Our B&B was a 10 minute walk along the beach to the old town where we spent a lot of time in the Marche Provençal, a wonderful daily outdoor food market.



With a wood burning oven on the back of his truck, this man and wife team prepared a Provençal specialty called socca, a chickpea pancake.



The socca was delicious!





This Antibes beach was just a little bit more crowded in the afternoon than it was in the morning!



May 26 - After a final garden breakfast at La Bastide, we packed up the car and headed for the Luberon.



Two hours of driving brought us to our next home - a beautiful stone house on a farm called Le Verger outside the town of Gordes in the Luberon region of Provence. Our room was gorgeous, with a beautiful view of the mountains from our terrace.



We spent the rest of the day walking around Gordes.



May 27 - This was a busy and fun Saturday that started with a visit to the *Village Des Bories*.



Bories are stone huts characteristic of this area. This village of sheep pens, stone bread ovens, threshing areas and city walls dates back hundreds of years.

Roussillon, perched on its ochre cliffs, was our next stop where we walked, shopped and had a delicious lunch in a lively cafe.





The ochre deposits give the whole village of Roussillon a soft, reddish-pink color.





After lunch, we found the very small village of Joucas. We had lots of fun finding our way through the small streets.

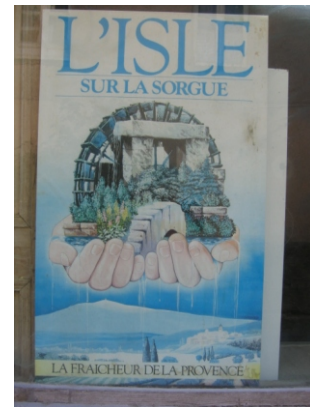


Near the parking lot where we left our car, we watched a spirited group of nine retired fellows playing petanque.





Just off the main road through the Luberon is a 2000 year old Roman bridge called the Pont St. Julien - and it's still in use! At the end of a long full day, we stopped for coffee in the town of Goult, where we grocery shopped for an evening picnic on the balcony of our room back at Le Verger.



May 28 - L'Isle Sur La Sorgue is a charming town where the Sorgue River divides into many canals which were used to turn water wheels that powered the city's wool and silk industries during medieval times.





We arrived in L'Isle early that Sunday to enjoy Provence's biggest market, featuring antiques, clothing and food.





Sharon bought some hand made lavender wands.



Delices de Luberon had a terrific assortment of tapenades for us to taste!



We returned to L'Isle Sur La Sorgue for a quiet dinner on the river that evening.



May 29 - Monday was bright and sunny ... but the famous mistral wind was blowing! After another delicious breakfast at Le Verger prepared by our charming host Danielle, we set off for another day of exploring Provence with a visit to Oppède-Le-Vieux that included a long uphill walk to the ruined chateau above the old town.





So we climbed up, up and up to the top! What a view - and we relaxed afterward at a small café with coffee and tea when we came back down.



Our next town was St. Saturnin-Les-Apt, with - you guessed it - a ruined chateau above! Undaunted, we began another trek.



**AND UP - -
and up - -
So we climbed up - -**

**And it was worth it! After making
our way back down to St. Saturnin,
we treated ourselves to
Double Caramel Magnum
ice cream bars!**



**The last stop of the day was the 12th century Cistercian
Abbey de Senanques. Then it was back to Le Verger
for a relaxing evening watching
the sunset from the
balcony of
our room.**



May 30 - With the mistral still blowing, we left Le Verger and drove 45 minutes to Avignon. The Palace of the Popes was impressive and it was fun to see the famous broken bridge over the Rhone river, Le Pont d'Avignon



The mistral is a *serious* wind. During for the last few days, it had been gusting up to 110 kph!



We enjoyed a break from the wind at a fun restaurant in the basement of a school for the arts. After lunch, we continued walking through the old streets of the city.



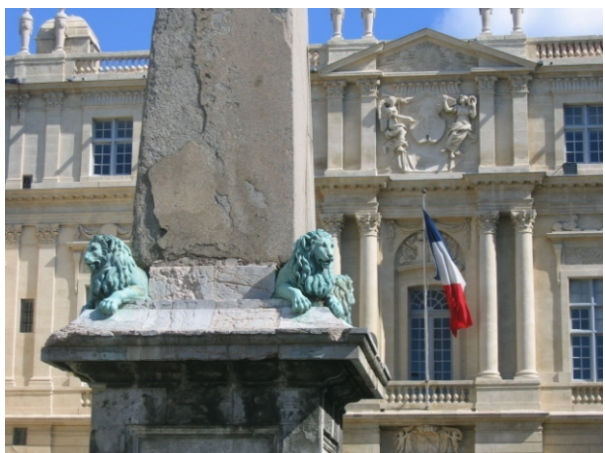
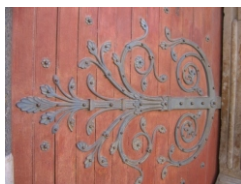
We left Avignon to find our next farmhouse outside the city of Arles. Upon our arrival, 13 year old Jean-Baptiste was the only one home and showed us to our room, which was equipped with a genuine farm-alarm-clock in a coop located right outside our window!



May 31 - We love the street markets. Arles' Wednesday market spreads out around town walls with an array of food and clothing.



Arles had an interesting old town full of cafes, museums and lots of Roman ruins. The church of St. Trophime on the Place de la Republique dates from the 12th century.



The cloisters of St. Trophime were very peaceful. During our walk around town, we found a great little restaurant for lunch called Le Dame Jeanne.



The Roman arena in Arles still hosts events like bullfights and concerts!





June 1 - Another sunny, windy day greeted us when we visited the Pont du Gard, a Roman aqueduct.



From the Pont du Gard, we drove to the village of Uzès. This was an absolutely charming town, so we walked until we found just the right sidewalk cafe for lunch.



During lunch, we were serenaded by two accordionists. When they found out Gary could play, he was invited to join in and played a couple of songs that brought the surrounding shopkeepers out to listen!



Shopping for dessert in France is fun!



In Uzes, we enjoyed touring the Medieval Garden before heading back home to our farm outside Arles.





June 2 - The mistral winds continued as we visited the mountaintop town of Les Baux de Provence. Though sunny, the strong gusts on the cliffs made for some cold hiking.



A boisson *chaude* would have been nice!



The wind was much calmer once we climbed down from the chateau. After a pleasant walk around town, we left Les Baux for St. Remy.





In St. Remy de Provence we had four excellent food experiences ...

At Huiles de Monde we tasted a wide variety of provencal olive oils and tapenades



Le Petit Duc, above, specialized in cookies and sweets made from authentic ancient recipes - really.



We bought lots of Incredible chocolates from Joel Durand.



One of the young ladies at Huiles de Monde highly recommended the local Brasserie des Alpilles for lunch. Her husband was the chef!





On the way back to the farm from St. Remy, we stopped at an ancient windmill (which was very appropriate to the weather conditions!) on top of a hill just outside the town of Fontvieille.



June 3 - After an early breakfast, we drove about two hours west to the medieval walled town of Carcassonne. For lunch, we both had the regional Languedoc specialty of cassoulet of lamb - fantastic!





After visiting the cathedral and touring the inner walls of the chateau, we relaxed back at our hotel, walking back up to the walled town for an evening stroll and dinner.



June 4 - On Sunday morning we drove from Carcassone to Barcelona. We dropped our rental car at the airport, then took a taxi to our new home for the next three days, the Hotel Continental Barcelona. We loved the location - right on the pedestrian La Rambla with a nice little balcony where we could eat breakfast.



Plaça Catalunya was 100 yards from the hotel, and when we walked there we found a huge and friendly throng demonstrating for the political rights of their region with an immense Catalanian flag.



Sunday evening was spent looking at the interesting architecture of the buildings on La Rambla.



June 5 - Parc Güell, high on a hill, was our first destination. The Spanish architect Antonio Gaudí designed the structures in the park at the turn of the 20th century.







We left the park to see La Sagrada Família, Gaudi's unfinished cathedral in his modernista style.



We wanted to see more of the modernista buildings, so Gary led the way onto the subway and into the Gracia neighborhood where we saw Gaudi's Casa Mila.





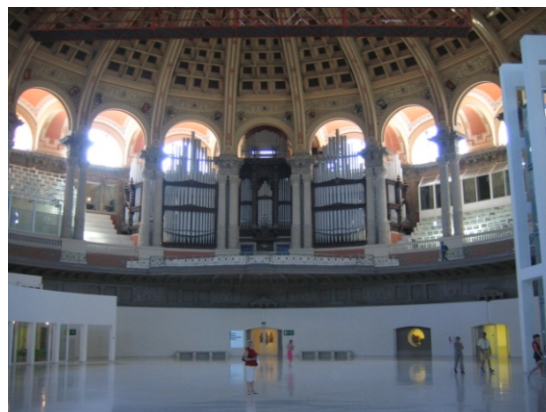
Gracia is an upscale neighborhood and we found a great ice cream place called No-No with a fine table on the shady sidewalk.



After our siesta, we took to the streets of the Barri Gotic in the old town near our hotel.



June 6 - The last day of our vacation started with a visit to Parc de Montjuic, a vast city park home to the National Art Museum of Catalonia.





The view looking back toward Barcelona from the terrace in front of the museum.



Also in Montjuic, the Poble Espanyol, built for an exposition in 1929, is a collection of architectural styles from all the regions of Spain in the form of one large village. There are dozens of artisans working here, with shops to sell their goods, two art museums and lots of good restaurants.





After another wonderful lunch next to the fountain at a sidewalk café, we heard music in the distance. It was a surprise to see a 20 piece accordion orchestra from Germany performing in the main plaza! It was even more of a surprise to hear them playing the Village People's "YMCA". A German brass band followed the accordionists and played, among other songs, "You Ain't Nothing But A Hound Dog". We have seldom had such a fun, interesting, varied and dubious musical experience. It also seemed fitting to end our vacation with a perfect example of globalization: an accordion orchestra from Stuttgart, Germany in Barcelona, Spain playing the "Stars & Stripes Forever".





June 23 - Nick, Bettie, Janet Erica, Domenick & Cameron arrived in Fresno and spent the evening with us at home. We swam and had a great dinner that Sharon had prepared.



June 24 was Janet's 65th birthday, and as her present, we let her buy us all lunch!





June 24 - The evening began with friends and family gathering at the Picadilly Inn to celebrate the recent marriage of Marc and Amanda.



Here comes the bride!





Marc and Amanda were toasted first by Gary, then by Jeremy and Kerry.



Dinner is served!





Gary played an Italian medley for the bride & groom.





Alexis sang "Summer Samba" for Marc and Amanda's first dance. They were joined on the dance floor by Gary and Sharon, then Janet, Nick and Bettie.





Marc and Amanda cut their cake.



Alexis led a rousing rendition of "Happy Birthday" to Gail and Janet





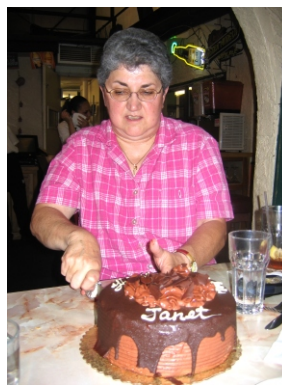
The later it got, the better everyone danced. Or it might have just seemed that way.





June 25 - We all had brunch at one of our favorite Mexican restaurants to celebrate Janet's birthday. And we were entertained by Tenochitlan, the best mariachi band in the San Joaquin valley!





Janet was thrilled with her Librarian Action Figure ... and even more thrilled with the giant sombrero and birthday serenade.



Later in the day, family and friends gathered at Marc & Amanda's home for swimming and dinner.





July 20, 2006
Escrow closed on our new house
in Clovis. This is what the house
looked like before the front garden
was removed and the interior was
repainted.



August 4 through August 13, 2006



Sharon's sister, Susan Burns and Susan's daughter Shawna Singh and her children Anand and Elizabeth visited us in California. These pictures were taken on the Monterey Peninsula.





We took our visitors to Elkhorn Slough in Moss Landing, Roaring Camp in Felton, and the Santa Cruz Beach & Boardwalk.



Before returning to Cincinnati, we visited the Fig Fair in Fresno and our new home in Clovis.





**August 2006 - Moving in and taking out!
We moved from our Fresno apartment to our new house in Clovis, painted the interior and immediately started removing the front garden.**



Once the digging began we learned that the hardpan is over six feet thick!





The new garden and patio will take advantage of the view of the park across the street.



Our gardeners, Sadot and Saul, hard at work laying the flagstone for the new patio. We also extended the patio in the backyard.



September 24, 2006
Housewarming party with some of our friends
and new neighbors.





The party had an Italian flavor with bocce, Italian foods and lots of Italian songs played on the accordion.





October 2, 2006
Our newly planted
front garden with
views to the park
across the street.



October 22, 2006
Bodacious Beading Bash!



We met at "Bella Bead" to choose the beads for our projects with the assistance of professional beader Alexis Rossi, before gathering at the Rossi home for lunch and a beading session.



Guess the number of beaded necklaces in the box and win a prize!





Denise came closest to guessing the number of necklaces and was the grand winner.



Matt & Marc dropped by for a visit.



Beaders posing with Alexis and their completed projects.



October 23, 2006

Gary and Sharon spent the day in Sequoia National Park. A 90 minute drive from Clovis, Sequoia is home to the giant Sequoia redwood trees. At an altitude of about 7000 feet, autumn colors were all around us.

This is the General Sherman tree the largest living thing on our planet.



Sharon is standing in an outline of the footprint of the General Sherman tree!



The former Giant Forest store is now the Sequoia museum.





A fallen redwood is big enough to make a tunnel you can drive through!



Sharon at the General Grant tree, our national Christmas tree.





October 31, 2006 - Dressed in her hippie Halloween costume for the trick-or-treaters, Sharon tried out her brand new Jamis bicycle which was a gift from Marc & Amanda.

November 4, 2006 - Gary, Sharon, Marc and Amanda were on the coast for the final two days of our store closing sale in Pacific Grove.



Amanda and Sharon spent part of the day antiquing in Moss Landing.



Sharon waving goodbye from the front of our little cottage in Pacific Grove.





November 5, 2006
This was the final day for our California Piano store in Pacific Grove after 25 years in business on the Monterey Peninsula.



November 21, 2006

Erica Rossi, Vicki Larsen, Domenick & Cameron stopped by our home for a visit on their way to southern California.



Domenick & Cameron enjoyed playing the piano and playing in the park across the street.

**November 25, 2006
Amanda, Alexis,
Marc and Sharon
decorated for
Christmas while
Gary played carols.**



**Alexis began baking
her Christmas cookies**





December 3, 2006
Dinner at Ivy & Linda's house



Ivy & Linda prepared a fantastic meal that was enjoyed by Sharon, Gary, Alexis, Scarlet, Marc and Amanda





After dinner, we walked from Ivy & Linda's home to nearby Van Ness Avenue, Fresno's Christmas Tree Lane.





December 22, 2006
Sharon & Alexis spent the day preparing
a dinner buffet and dessert buffet for our
thirty Christmas sing-a-long guests
that evening.





Gary played Christmas songs for everyone to sing throughout the evening.

The guests were treated to solo performances by Krissie Borofka, Rich Berrett, Bill Murphy, Don Gaede, Alexis and Sharon.





December 24, 2006
Our family gathered for a wonderful turkey dinner. After dinner we spent a couple of hours opening presents.







December 25, 2006 - - On Christmas morning we strolled the halls of Valley Children's Hospital, playing and singing Christmas carols with our friend Nancy Hatcher. Sal and Denise Sciandra shared Christmas dinner with our family.

